

any fuss, other than two Magpies (*Gymnorhina dorsalis*) heard giving a brief morning carol.

However, the Silver Gulls (*Larus novaehollandiae*), which are very numerous and tame in Albany, seem to have had some very unpleasant shoeks. They were roosting on roofs and various vantage points not very far from the Senior Primary School in the main street when the light began to go and the air became colder. The leaders apparently decided it was time for roosting and after a great commotion led the flocks down towards the harbour. This decision took some time and darkness caught the two or three flocks some hundreds of metres from the shore line. They all settled on the grass—most on the Parade Street Soccer Ground—and remained there quite silently. When the light increased again the flocks took off and circled the centre of the town about fifty metres in the air for some time. Finally tiring of this the birds settled on buildings again but not on their accustomed perches or buildings. They favoured high ridge caps and had an unmistakable air of discomposure for the remainder of the day. One must be sympathetic with the seagulls for not only were they unable to reach their sleeping areas before darkness but were not allowed to go to sleep and to eat it all, their usual lunch hour feed of crusts and scraps of food on the school playground did not eventuate. The children all ate lunch in school and naturally crusts went into dustbins.

H. O. WEBSTER, Albany.

Departure Date of the Bridled Tern in Shark Bay.—Serventy *et al.* (*The Handbook of Australian Sea-Birds*, 1971, p. 228), give the departure date of the migratory Bridled Tern (*Sterna anaethetus*) as late February in the Perth area and April at Green Islets and the Abrolhos Islands. By a mere fluke I was able to determine the exact day and almost the hour when they left Slope Island, Shark Bay this year (1974).

On Sunday, February 24 my wife and I were on the island fishing most of the morning and noticed the terns seemed more agitated than usual, flying to and fro and settling on the rocks for only a few seconds at a time, and calling to each other incessantly. Only a small number seemed to be present so we guessed they were preparing to leave. We left the island at 11.45 a.m. and returned at 2 p.m., intending to take some photographs of the birds with a new 250 mm. lens I had just bought. However, not one bird was in sight and although we drove out there daily for the next week not a tern did we find.

—ROBERT C. MITCHELL, Hastings, N.Z.

Discovery of the Western Whipbird at Hopetoun.—The known distribution of the Western Whipbird, *Psophodes nigrogularis*, in Western Australia has been documented by Serventy and Whittell (*Birds of Western Australia*, 1967). It has been found at Two Peoples Bay and in mallee country around Borden and Gnowangerup and its most easterly location was hitherto 120 kilometres east of Borden near the Fitzgerald River.

On November 6, 1974 whilst visiting Hopetoun with members of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union engaged in compiling a list of birds in the Fitzgerald National Park I heard a Western Whipbird calling near the coast road 3 km east of the town, and on November 9, two birds were observed and the identification confirmed. Subsequently a third bird was heard calling on the road to Ravensthorpe, 32 km from Hopetoun, by Mrs. J. Seabrook and Mrs. J. Clark. The known range is thus extended eastwards by 80 km.

The habitat was dense thickets of Round-leaved Moort, *Eucalyptus platypus*, and in the area close to Hopetoun this was supplemented by low coastal heath. All areas where the birds were found were composed of dense mallee regrowth resulting from fire.

An examination of tape recordings of the songs of these birds and